

## Altered Lived Body: A Phenomenological Critique on Transhumanism

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**Abstract:** Perhaps, one of the greatest challenges that the modern world tries to solve is the boundaries of human beings' capacity. Their desire to escape the limits of humanity and the natural cycle of life that culminates in death brought us to a new occurring stage of history: transhumanism. With this current phenomenon, it is impossible not to see its implications in human life and the world. In his book, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty argued that the human body is an expressive space that contributes to the significance of personal actions. The body is also the origin of expressive movement and is a medium for the perception of the world. Bodily experience gives perception a meaning beyond that established simply by thought. Hence, modifying parts of a human being's body, or uploading the mind in an artificial body or a computer, will cause a different perception and experience of the world. In this paper, I aim to present how the analysis of Merleau-Ponty on human beings' perception can explain the phenomenological experience of a transhuman in the world. Within this analysis, I claim that a transhuman will experience the world differently from human beings. I will divide this paper into four sections. First, I will discuss the movement of transhumanism, wherein I will explain the goal and the vision that transhumanists have for the world and humanity. Second, I will present how a transhuman, having a modified body or living inside an artificial body or a computer in the evolutionary stage of transhumanism loses their memory and personal identity using Merleau-Ponty's discussion of the body and perception. This will further explain the difference between the phenomenological experience or perception of a human and a transhuman. Third, in line with the loss of memory, I will explore how the realities of the world will become more subjective between the two. And last, I will provide an argument on why transhumanism is possible due to the advancements and developments of technologies in the modern world but should not happen.

**Keywords:** *Lived body, Merleau-Ponty, Perception, Phenomenology, Transhumanism*

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## I. Transhumanism: The Beginning of Modern Humanism

Following Darwin's theory of evolution, humans evolved from animality to humanity. Today, after stages of evolution, humanity is in another epoch. Human beings live in a time when technologies advance and develop far from what was imagined. The fantasies of science fiction become real options for their lives and how they can live in a world facing different crises. They became developed and instead of solving such problems, they resort to saving themselves. However, these advancements of technologies raise questions, not just about the future of humanity, but concerning their present and past. The developments that technologies have provided paved the way for humans to dream of preserving their mind and consciousness while leaving their biological bodies. This way, they can live in a dying world, as long as it is alive, without any repercussions and contact with its effects. It is the new paradigm for thinking about humanity's future to save them from the consequences of their actions toward the world and live unrestrictedly by their biological bodies. These developments also created a movement with an ideology that seeks to use these technologies for the development and expansion of human capacities: transhumanism. Considering the developments and advancements of technologies and how they are used in modern society, transhumanism seeks to continue and accelerate the evolution of intelligent life beyond its current human form and limitations through science and technology guided by life-promoting principles and values.<sup>1</sup> Transhumanism focuses on what it is to be a human being during technological advancements and developments that are now redefining human nature.

With the development of transhumanism, a more elaborate concept of it was established by its proponents, specifically Nick Bostrom. For him, with the help of modern technologies, it is possible to alleviate human suffering and improve the human condition.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it can be concluded that transhumanism's purpose is to alter human nature to avoid pain and diseases and improve humanity's life inside a dying world.<sup>3</sup> They want to transcend human nature and challenge the history of humanity's evolution using science and technology. Therefore, they are creating a new ideology that promises an end to all the suffering of human beings.<sup>4</sup> However, transhumanism does not only want to escape the laws of nature but also the human struggle with death. For its proponents, it is the thesis that humans can and ought to use technology to alter and improve human biology. From mind uploading, cryonics, artificial intelligence, robotics, space exploration to brain and body modifications, transhumanism's mission is life extension to increase the maximum human lifespan.<sup>5</sup> It is to increase

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<sup>1</sup> Max More, "True Transhumanism: A Reply to Don Ihde" in *Transhumanism and its Critics*, ed. Gregory R. Hansell and William Grassie (Philadelphia: Metanexus Institute, 2011), 69.

<sup>2</sup> Nick Bostrom, "What is Transhumanism?," last modified 2001, <https://www.nickbostrom.com/old/transhumanism.html>.

<sup>3</sup> This statement was inferred from the idea of the modifications—altering or changing the biological body—to prevent it from experiencing and perceiving mundane sensations.

<sup>4</sup> Despite the different branches of transhumanism, its common goal and purpose are that of alleviating human suffering and to stop the struggle of humanity against death or immortality. However, because transhumanism has its own branches, it is arguable if all transhumanists' goal is to make the lives of human beings in the world indefinitely.

<sup>5</sup> Elmo Keep, "A Timeline of Transhumanism," last modified 2015, <https://www.theverge.com/a/transhumanism-2015/history-of-transhumanism> (emphasis added).

the length of time a human being is alive and diversify the matter in which increasing options and capabilities a person exists because a human being's life, the length of time they exist, is bounded by a single century and its matter is tied to biology.<sup>6</sup> However, the idea of technologically enhancing human bodies is not new. In the past, human beings made devices such as wooden legs, hearing aids, spectacles, and false teeth to improve their living. Transhumanism is different because the purpose of their alteration of human nature and modification of the biological body.

It is not hyperbolic to simply put the goal of transhumanism as creation of immortals, as most of their proponents envision and argue about it. One of the ways they imagined it is through mind uploading or the continuity of one's consciousness on an artificial body or a computer. In this process, the mind as a collection of memories, personality, and attributes of a specific individual, is transferred from its original biological brain and body to an artificial computational substrate or a silicone-enhanced body.<sup>7</sup> The argument does not only defy the laws of nature but also treats the biological body only as a vessel for the ideas of the brain and where the mind is stored. The body, through which one experiences and perceives the world, is then ignored despite it being an integral part of human identity, memories, and knowledge of the world. Transhumanism becomes a dangerous idea because it disregards the body's role in human beings' way of knowing and perceiving the world. It plainly describes objective reality as independent from human being's perception.

## II. Merleau-Ponty and Transhumanism: The Lived Body and Beyond

Even though transhumanism ignores the role that the biological body plays in knowing objective reality and building identity, the debates surrounding it come only between its proponents and bio-conservatives. Transhumanism claims that by overcoming our biological, neurological, and psychological constraints, human beings will acquire much more freedom than they have before.<sup>8</sup> Restricting potential modifications of the biological body will result in the invasion of individual freedom. Despite that, bio-conservatives impose a ban and restriction due to their concern that transhumanism will dehumanize humanity. For them, transhumanism will destroy the very element of being a human being and will make humanity lose morality and worthiness.<sup>9</sup> However, their criticism is only rooted in an ethical argument. They fear that through the process of modifications of the biological body and mind uploading, it is not only human beings that will be changed, but also the ethical values, politics, and the whole society at large. Hence, one of their most viable criticisms is the wider division and gap between the social classes that transhumanism will create. However, these inadequacies can be realized by arguing phenomenologically.

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<sup>6</sup>Natasha Vita-More, "The Transhumanist Manifesto," last modified 2018, <https://natashavita-more.com/transhumanist-manifesto/> (emphasis added).

<sup>7</sup> Mind Uploading, "What is Mind Uploading?," last modified 2015, <http://www.minduploading.org/> (emphasis added).

<sup>8</sup> Tamar Sharon, *Human Nature in an Age of Biotechnology* (New York: Springer, 2013), 42.

<sup>9</sup> Vanshika Mittal, "Bioconservatism Versus Transhumanism in Environmental Ethics," last modified February 18, 2020, <https://nickledanddimed.com/2020/02/18/bioconservatism-vs-transhumanism-in-environmental-ethics/> (emphasis added).

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in his book, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, distinguishes two concepts of the body: the first is labeled as an objective body or the biological body of human beings, and the second is labeled as the phenomenal body or the lived body.<sup>10</sup> Regardless of his distinction of two concepts of the body, there is only one body. The lived body extends from the edge of consciousness where humans are aware of things to the world in which those things are seen, felt, and heard.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the body is an important factor in how human beings experience, act, think, and perceive their personal identity, the objects that exist outside them, the others, and the world. He infers the idea of embodiment which has a double meaning: it encompasses both the body as a lived, experiential structure and the body as the context or milieu of a cognitive mechanism.<sup>12</sup> Embodiment is an essential element of a human being's existence, which is defined by what he calls the symbolic function.

Merleau-Ponty claimed that embodiment of human being is central to their consciousness and self, pushing away from seeing objects as isolatable and reducible phenomena inside the brain and toward seeing them as more distributed and relational features of human beings' lives in the world.<sup>13</sup> The world and the objects that human beings can perceive are not merely the creations of their minds and consciousness, but their experience of the world. But what determines what we perceive is the structure of the phenomenal field. The phenomenal field is not an object in the world; it presents objects in the world, the basis on which they appear.<sup>14</sup> Hence, for him, the body, as a whole system in the co-constitution of consciousness, plays an integral role in forming and gaining knowledge. Human beings' consciousness is not exclusively formed in their minds but through the body, which is the sole instrument of perception that human beings must perceive themselves, the objects outside them, and the world.

Central to Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is the idea of perception. For him, to exist as a human being means something much more complicated than exerting biological functions like breathing, feeding, perceiving, and moving. We need to understand man as an embodied sense-giver. For man who "exists," the lived body is not a functional machine that elicits an appropriate reaction to an environmental stimulus.<sup>15</sup> It is a system of meanings by which a phenomenal object is recognized. The intentions of the person perceiving an object are reflected in the field to which the phenomenal object belongs. However, perception is only the thought that one is perceiving.<sup>16</sup> To Merleau-Ponty then, perception is not a channel that simply filters information from a separate environment, rather it is a

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<sup>10</sup>Alex Scott, "Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception," last modified 2002, <https://www.angelfire.com/md2/timewarp/merleauPonty.html>.

<sup>11</sup>Ted Toadvine, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty," last modified 2016, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/merleau-ponty/#PoliPhil>.

<sup>12</sup>Eleanor Rosch, Evan Thompson, and Francisco Varela, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991), xvi.

<sup>13</sup>Patricia Moya Cañas, "The understanding of the body and movement in Merleau-Ponty," last modified December 19, 2016, [http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0101-31732019000100201](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0101-31732019000100201)

<sup>14</sup>Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (New York: Routledge, 2012), 57.

<sup>15</sup>Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 71.

<sup>16</sup>Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 40.

kind of interconnected interaction of body, an object that exists outside the body and the environment.<sup>17</sup> He argues that consciousness is not merely a representative function or a power of signification. Consciousness is a projective activity that develops sensory data beyond their own specific significance and uses them to express spontaneous action.<sup>18</sup> For him, the human body is an expressive space that contributes to the significance of personal actions. It is also the origin of expressive movement and is a medium for the perception of the world. Merleau-Ponty emphasized the body as the primary site of knowing the world; the body and that which it perceives could not be disentangled from one another.<sup>19</sup> Bodily experience gives perception a meaning beyond the meaning established simply by thought. Thus, Descartes' cogito (I think, therefore I am) does not account for how consciousness is influenced by the spatiality of a human being's own body.<sup>20</sup> Merleau-Ponty also argues that existence and substance presuppose each other. Substance expresses existence, and existence realizes itself through substance. However, substance is not merely a form of signification or expression of existence, and existence is not merely what is expressed as substance. Existence and substance explain each other.<sup>21</sup> Human beings must physically exist before they can think about what it means to exist.

Merleau-Ponty established the importance of biological body in knowing and perceiving the self, the objects that exist outside the body, the others, and the world. It is through the body, specifically lived body, that they acquire knowledge and consciousness. Hence, the contents of the human mind and consciousness are reflections of their perception and understanding of the world. Humans cannot separate themselves from their perceptions of the world; therefore, they cannot separate themselves from their bodies. Merleau-Ponty pointed out that when human beings enquire into their everyday experience, they always find themselves in some way involved with the world.<sup>22</sup> The body exists both as a vessel for the mind and as a tool to experience and make sense of the world. Therefore, mind uploading, one of the processes that transhumanism aims to achieve, or any modifications of human being's biological body in ways that affect how they can perceive the world, will cause the loss of memory<sup>23</sup> and personal identity. The lived body, in which they experience the world, when modified, will be altered and will result in perceiving the world differently.

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<sup>17</sup> Taylor Carman, *Merleau-Ponty* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 87.

<sup>18</sup> Patricia Moya, "Habit and Embodiment in Merleau-Ponty," last modified July 25, 2014, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fnhum.2014.00542/full#:~:text=According%20to%20Merleau%2DPonty%2C%20there,a%20form%20of%20embodied%20consciousness.>

<sup>19</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xx.

<sup>20</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 422.

<sup>21</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 338.

<sup>22</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 317.

<sup>23</sup> Human beings gain knowledge through perception and making sense of the sensations and experiences they acquire from their environment. However, these knowledges do not automatically enter the mind, but rather, the biological body senses it. When the instrument to acquire these things is gone, the knowledge acquired through it will also be lost.

Transhumanism ignores the part that the body plays in human interaction with the world and in gaining knowledge about it. If the mind is transferred or uploaded to a different body, whether an artificial or computerized one, it will lose its ability to know and experience things. The mind is unable to perceive the world that surrounds it because it has lost its capacity to perceive—because it does not have a biological body that makes human beings see and experience the world. The body is an integral part of knowing and experiencing the self, the objects that exist outside the body, the others, and the world. The world is not what human beings think, but what they live through.

### III. Remains: Will Memory and Consciousness Stay?

Consciousness is necessarily, through experience, embodied and derives its nature from the lived body. Modifications and alterations of the human body, regardless of its interests, such as alleviating suffering and transcendence from mundane sensations, will also alter humanity's perception and knowledge of the world. The world around human beings is an objective reality, and how their biological body perceives it is how the world introduces itself and how they experience and sense it. It is where the connection between human beings and the world begins. In the case of the phenomenon of the phantom limb, Merleau-Ponty argues that this phenomenon is explainable neither through a reductive psychological explanation, nor an irreducible psychological account, nor even an artificial juxtaposition of the two.<sup>24</sup> For him, the phantom limb is a result of a fundamental ambiguity of human beings being of experience as structured according to a tacit set of sedimentations and possibilities.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, losing a limb or a part of a human body does not alter the perception of the self; the objects outside the body, the others that live in the world, and of the world, because the body, which the amputated limb is connected before, remains the vehicle of being in the world and for a living being, having a body means being united with a definite milieu, merging with certain projects, and being perpetually engaged therein.<sup>26</sup> Hence, the body remains open to the world.

The body with an amputated limb has the same perception because it is still present in the world at a certain moment. The body remains engaged with the world, perceives it, and experiences it. The body with an amputated limb still experiences things as a whole regardless of the missing part. It remains as it is because of its same perception and experience of the world. In the case of the phantom limb, the person is aware of and inhibited by the loss of the limb. However, the body continues to operate with the motor intentionality specific to the limb because the body, in its habituation and responsiveness, continues to respond to the objects in the world that invite the use of that limb.<sup>27</sup> Hence, even with the missing part, consciousness remains because the instrument through which it is derived remains. In the case of amputated limbs, not like in the process of modification of the body or mind uploading, memory and personal identity remains because the vehicle through which these things are acquired remains in the world, experiencing it through its biological and lived body. The

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<sup>24</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xli.

<sup>25</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xliv.

<sup>26</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 84.

<sup>27</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 13.

difference in perceiving, experiencing, and knowing the self, the objects that exist outside the human body, the others, and the world<sup>28</sup> from before might occur. It is nothing because the body remains as a whole even when a part of it is missing. However, the case of transhumanism is different. Modifying the biological body or changing it wholly and putting the human mind in another body, either an artificial body or a computer, will cause the loss of both memory and personal identity.

The mind is an instrument of the body and not vice versa; humans can immediately influence the mind through the body. In the case of a modified body, or a mind already put in an artificial body or computer, the memory of “pain” or the consciousness of being in pain, for example, will be erased because they do not experience it anymore. Hence, any mundane sensations that the world inflicts in the biological bodies of human beings will be gone on the mind of a transhuman,<sup>29</sup> because their body or vessel through which they perceive and sense the world does not feel it. Thus, it is not embodied in their consciousness anymore. They do not perceive the world as to how they perceived it before, resulting in the erasure of those memories. It is not because they consciously forget but because it is not part of their perception and experience of the world in the present condition of their artificial body or of the computer. It becomes useless for them; hence, it fades into their reality. However, this phenomenon will affect the memory and personal identity of an individual in the evolutionary stage of transhumanism<sup>30</sup> and the history of humanity. Today, perception and experience of the world are the objective realities of it, such as the burning sun or the cold winter. However, on the modification of the human body, these mundane sensations will become subjective. A transhuman might not feel human sensations of being submerged in a cold or hot place. Either their body is modified to be immune to those sensations or, a transhuman does not have a body to experience and perceive it. Hence, the realities of the world become subjective because of different perceptions of it – the world becomes a separated two realities: one is the reality of human beings, and the other is the reality of a transhuman.

#### IV. The Separated Realities of the World

In the evolutionary stage of transhumanism, the objective realities of the world could become subjective because every transhuman might experience the world differently inside a computer or the compositions of the body will react and sense differently in it. Hence, the possibility of different perceptions and experiences of the world, therefore creating different realities, might happen. The different experiences of the world will result in a subjective perception of the world because it no longer perceives the world the way it must be perceived, for there is no unity between humans' subjective experience and the external, objective facts. The body loses its relationship with the world

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<sup>28</sup> In this paper, the argument of what the biological body perceives is always subjected to four things: the self, the objects that exist outside the body, the others, and the world.

<sup>29</sup> Transhuman is what the modified human being or a mind uploaded in an artificial body or a computer in the evolutionary stage of transhumanism is called.

<sup>30</sup> The phrase “evolutionary stage of transhumanism” is still debatable because not all the proponents of transhumanism claim it to be an evolutionary stage. However, this will be used in the entirety of the paper to distinguish its time from today.

because its compositions are already modified or non-existent at all, hence, it moves away from the realities of the world instead of connecting with it. Changes in the compositions of the biological body will result in changes in the experience because perception is not a private mental event, nor is the body just one more material object set alongside others. Certainly, it can be argued that we lose sight of perception itself when we place it on either side of a sharp distinction between inner subjective experiences and external objective facts.<sup>31</sup> The structure of perception is the structure of the body. As Merleau-Ponty says, “my body is my point of view on the world.”<sup>32</sup> However, a body that is artificially created to avoid mundane sensations loses its real experience of the world. The body is a human being’s perspective on and of the world. And so it cannot be just one more contingent object or fact about the world.

In the evolutionary stage of transhumanism, the modifications of the body or the replacement of the body will affect human beings’ relationship with themselves, the objects that exist outside them, the others, and the world. We perceive others directly as between the pure subject personal and embodied living beings engaged with a world that we share.<sup>33</sup> Hence, changing the body while preserving the memories and consciousness of a human being is impossible because the lived body that the human has is the instrument to experience and perceive the world. Memories are impossible to retain in a different body, because consciously or unconsciously, the mind will be replaced with new memories and knowledge gained by the new artificial body or the computer – knowledge and memories that correspond to the needs of their artificial body or of the computer. Again, these memories are all lost not because they are forgotten, but because they became useless and inexistent in the consciousness and experience of the artificial body and the world. The artificial body or the modified body will experience new things that will also modify the contents of the mind and how it will understand and know the world. Hence, the world becomes a subjective field with subjective realities.

As transhumanism sees mind uploading as the destiny of the evolution of humanity, they missed acknowledging that this will miserably fail because the memories of the mind, including its consciousness, will not remain and cannot be retained when it is placed in an artificial body or a computer. There will be a vast difference between human life in a biological body and a transhuman that is in an artificial body or computer in terms of the realities in and of the world. Perceiving the world through compositions of the lived body and artificial body will result in a different experience of the world. In mind uploading, the data and the contents of the mind could be uploaded innumerable times. Hence, this process will erase the identity of the owner of the mind that is being uploaded. The original owner of the memories and consciousness would fade because it cannot be compared to the copies of it because the consciousness will have no difference. Therefore, death will be gone in the concept and cycle of human nature. One of the inevitable experiences of the world will not exist

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<sup>31</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xiii.

<sup>32</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xv.

<sup>33</sup> Dan Nixon, “The Body as Mediator,” last modified December 7, 2020, <https://aeon.co/essays/the-phenomenology-of-merleau-ponty-and-embodiment-in-the-world>.



anymore, thus, resulting in a different perspective of the world. Yet, despite these facts, transhumanists ignore such consequences because they believe that transhumanism is the only solution to prevent the extinction of humanity.

## V. The Case of Phenomenology and Transhumanism

The advancements and developments of technologies proved that transhumanism is not a just science-fiction story but a possible real-life option. Thus, the question humanity must ask is if it should happen. Transhumanism poses itself as an inevitable stage of development and realization of human being's freedom and capacity – an epoch of the retirement of limitations and human suffering. In other words, it presents itself as salvation from pain and crises. However, notwithstanding the autonomy of the human beings, transhumanism intensifies current problems that the world is facing, and at the same time, creates new crises.

If transhumanism's only purpose was to enhance the condition of human life such as to alleviate them from suffering a disease or replacing missing body parts (e.g., replacing the amputated limb with an artificial limb), it must happen. For Merleau-Ponty, the body is not simply just a biological entity, but rather the location of multiple levels of social, sexual, expressive, and emotional values that constitute and constrain the subject in their dealings with the world.<sup>34</sup> However, even Merleau-Ponty will agree to transhumanism if the case is only enhancing the human biological body since human's existence is technologically textured. Humans influence the creation of technologies, but technologies also affect how human beings act, perceive, and understand.<sup>35</sup> Technologies, such as eyeglasses, a blind man's stick, or even a telescope used to see the world beyond clearly that is not possible to be seen using the naked eye, have become part of human beings' lives to perceive and experience the world differently.

Evidently, humans can use tools and technologies to extend their capacity of perception.<sup>36</sup> Human beings use these tools and technologies to perceive the world in-and-through it. For Heidegger, they have become part of one single phenomenal experience, for which human beings cannot distinguish between diverse aspects of it.<sup>37</sup> However, tools and technologies which are used to mediate and enhance human perception of the world must be subjected to active regulation by the body. In this case, there must remain a phenomenological, biological, and social difference between the biological body as a sole entity and the tools and technologies that are used by the body. However, transhumanism's goal surpasses this limitation. They do not just want to enhance the body by using tools and technologies to help human beings perceive the world clearly, but to modify it, the means

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<sup>34</sup>Ron McClamrock, "Notes on the Introduction to The Phenomenology of Perception," last modified 1990, <https://www.albany.edu/~ron/papers/mp-intro.html>

<sup>35</sup>Ron McClamrock, "Notes on the Introduction to The Phenomenology of Perception," last modified 1990, <https://www.albany.edu/~ron/papers/mp-intro.html>

<sup>36</sup> However, there is a difference between enhancement and modification. The former's goal is to amplify the experience and perception of human beings, while the latter aims to alter and change it.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Wheeler, "Martin Heidegger," last modified 2011, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger/>.

of being in the world, and alter human nature by uploading one's mind into an artificial body or a computer. Thus, issues concerning humanity (of the self and the others) and the world arise. Transhumanism treats the body as a disposable vessel with no integral role in perceiving and knowing the world or a material that has no connection with it.

Disconnecting it through modifying the body to prevent perceiving mundane sensations causes it to lose its relationship and connection with the world. The body is not a container for the mind and consciousness but a constant constitutive part of the world. The body is important in the perception and experience of the world. For example, when the mind is put into an artificial body or in a computer, the mind will no longer be distinct because it cannot perceive the world anymore; thus, it is nothing but a material substance that carries data and knowledge.

Furthermore, human beings' minds could be altered, experimented on, and even replicated without their autonomy through technological manipulation and modification. The DNA humans have led to its composition and the different organs of the body if replaced with a computer substrate or an artificial body goes against all laws of nature.<sup>38</sup> It is impossible for human beings to perceive and experience the world if they do not have the body or their body does not have the compositions to do so. A transhuman can live indefinitely, as long as they want, but they will lose their human nature and connection with themselves, the objects outside them, the others, and the world. Moreover, why would someone want to live for so long? Unless they are studying philosophy or waiting for the destruction of the world. Again, it is not the question of transhumanism's possibility or impossibility that one must answer. It can happen. But the question must be is if it should happen. In the evolutionary stage of transhumanism, the subjects they try to alleviate from suffering and pain will be gone. In the process of losing those things, human beings also lose their human nature. Thus, in the stage of transhumanism, there will be no more humans.

## VI. Transhumanism: An Open-Shut Case

In the process of mind uploading, transhumanism gives the evolution of man's finite and definite progress while making them live indefinitely. They gave it finality, thus, contradicting their perception of human beings as creatures capable of transcending their limitations and human constraints. Human beings continually progress; discontinuing their evolution is impossible to be put in a certain stage. Furthermore, one of the questions that arise with transhumanism, modifying the biological body or uploading the mind to an artificial body or a computer, is if transhumans are humans or machines. It is already argued that transhumanism alters humanity's human nature, hence, causing the disappearance of their subjectivity. However, considering the term 'human' in transhumanism, it is easy to conceive that human beings will remain with either a modified body or an artificial body.

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<sup>38</sup> Thomas Too, "The Cons of Mind Uploading," <https://transhumanism102.weebly.com/the-cons-of-mind-uploading.html> (emphasis added).

Notwithstanding, transhumanism's visions, claiming to be guided by life-promoting principles and values, the biological body of a human being and humanity's human nature have characteristics that align with their humanhood and personhood. It is within their relationship with themselves, with the others, their perception, and experience of the objects outside their biological body, their connection with the world, and their experience of life and death.<sup>39</sup> Hence, altering these things that make human beings who they are and what they are in and to the world annihilates their humanhood and personhood.

Human beings' perception and experience of the world are unique. Both because of the compositions of the biological body to the world and their lived body. For example, only the human's body can feel the warmth of a cat's furs when being touched or held. The human being's body can feel the comfort of a dog's kiss when they are playing with it or just sitting and making them feel that they are not alone. There are many unique and unexplainable things that only the lived bodies of human beings are capable of feeling, experiencing, and perceiving. However, the world is not solely created for human beings. Creatures experience and perceive it as well using their biological bodies. Yet, the capacity of human beings to make sense of the world and how they perceive and experience it is what makes their perception of the world different from other creatures. Hence, modifying human beings' bodies to be replaced with tools and technologies that cannot experience those things, or the mind being transferred in a computer where perceiving the world is impossible, in the evolutionary stage of transhumanism, knowing, experiencing, and perceiving the world will be different from how it was once experienced by the lived body. The world will be seen through a different lens and instrument of perception; hence, it will not align anymore with its relationship and connection to the body.

Transhumanism can happen, but it should not happen. The crises and conflicts of the world cannot be solved by transforming human beings into technologically modified beings or a consciousness uploaded to a computer. It is not true that the age of carbon-based life is coming to an end, and the only solution for human beings to withstand this change is to become silicon-based entities themselves or by uploading their consciousness into computers/supercomputers.<sup>40</sup> Being a transhuman, or a consciousness inside a computer, will not end poverty, famine, wars, and injustices. Becoming an immortal being will not solve but will intensify existing problems and will create new ones. One must not forget that the world is dialectic; it is always in motion. Hence, these contradictions can be solved, not just by saving human beings from it, making them not feel it anymore by modifying or changing the compositions of their bodies, but by solving its core origin and its root cause. It is not by altering human nature that these man-made crises are to be solved, but by changing the system to one that will serve humanity and ensure security, freedom, justice, and provide basic means of subsistence. The world will not be saved by losing our connection and relationship to it. The

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<sup>39</sup> These things that constitute the human nature of a human being is derived from the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty.

<sup>40</sup> Generation Byte, "The Universal Risk of Mind Uploading," <https://generationbyte.co.uk/universal-risk-of-mind-uploading/> (emphasis added).

body is human being's means to experience the world. Losing it will result in the disappearance of the experiences in and with the world.

Imagine the world in the stage of transhumanism. What will only remain of human beings is the word 'human' in terms of transhuman and posthuman. However, the sphere of becoming a human being is not only affirmed through the use of language. Being a human being transcends the word "human." Hence, it is impossible to argue that human beings remain humans in the stage of transhumanism without the bodies and compositions that make them human beings that feel, experience, and perceive themselves, the objects that exist outside them, the others, and the world. The sensations that human beings feel and experience make them who they are and create their perception of the world. It is only possible by having a biological body, with its complexities and compositions, that is connected with and in the world. Lastly, the goal of transhumanism to attain immortality is not the opposite of death but a contradiction of life. Their finality and finitude define human beings; this short existence makes them live their lives in the world with a purpose and what makes life worth living. This limitation of living is inherent to human beings; it is inevitable and must not be inverted and contradicted. Death, or the finitude of life, universally knocks on human beings to remind them of their connection to the world—nothing will remain, for it is a cycle that accords with the laws of nature.

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